

INFORMAL REPORT

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COUNTRY Siam

SUBJECT Activities of Pridi and Followers before and during the Attempted Coup of 26 February

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1. On 14 February, Tawi Tavitikul and Prasit Lulitanon, brother of Vichit (Pridi Banomyong's former Finance Minister), borrowed a car to drive to Sattahip for a conference with Pridi.
  2. It was Pridi who insisted that the radio announcement be the touch-off for the coup, since he believed it would "demoralize" the opposition.
  3. The Government statement that Pridi Banomyong, Vajarachai Chaisiddhivej, and others were inside the Grand Palace on the night of 26 February is correct. Pridi first went to the University of Moral and Political Science and then, at 10:00 p.m., made his way to the Palace, where he remained throughout the night. With Pridi was Major General Luang Sombun Saranuchit, wearing a uniform but without insignia. Once inside, he put the insignia on and ordered the Palace Guards to cooperate. Upon seeing Pridi, the Guards broke into cheers. "Chai Yoh, Chai Yoh" (Victory! Victory!). The Guards immediately took up defensive positions with the Free Thai Forces.
  4. After it was evident that retreat was necessary, the Guards put up a mock fight and, in so doing, won credit from the Government for aiding in the "defense" of the Palace. Marines were on hand at the time of retreat and required each escapee to sign his name. All signed faked names.
  5. Pridi remained in the vicinity of Bangkok following the attempted coup, thinking a compromise with Phibul could be reached. After a few days, he retired to an unknown position.

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